

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Fireworks in Budapest closing out the August 20 celebrations

MTI/Zoltán Máthé

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Events related to Hungary's EU presidency**

**Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Middle East**

**Stats office reports Q2 investment figures**

## TOP STORY

# SZIJJÁRTÓ: OIL SUPPLY TALKS 'NEARING FINISH'

Talks aimed at ensuring Hungary's long-term supply of crude oil "are nearing their final stage", despite a lack of support from the European Commission, the foreign minister said on Wednesday.

The foreign ministry quoted Péter Sziijártó as saying on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting that "Hungary's energy supplies are secure despite the challenges you are familiar with", referring to deepening conflicts in the world. "Regrettably, the European Commission is continuing an unacceptable behaviour concerning the situation that has arisen with Ukraine practically banning Russian company Lukoil's shipments to Hungary and Slovakia," Sziijártó said. The commission should take action since Ukraine's move "seriously impacts Hungary's oil supplies," he said, noting the association agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, under which the latter party "must not hinder the transit of energy to EU members". "Despite Ukraine's violation of the association agreement ... it is clear that we cannot rely on support from the EC," he said, adding that the Hungarian government was conducting negotiations "full steam" to ensure balanced supplies in the long run. Meanwhile, Sziijártó said gas supplies to Hungary were unaffected by an escalation of fighting between Russia and Ukraine.

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## **EU AFFAIRS MINISTER: EC 'WHIPPING UP EMOTIONS' ON HUNGARY NATIONAL CARD**

The European Commission and certain member states are "whipping up emotions" on the matter of Hungary's National Card programme, the EU affairs minister said on Facebook on Wednesday. János Bóka also posted a letter signed by Interior Minister Sándor Pintér, written to EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson who has earlier voiced concerns about extending the card programme to include Russians and Belarusians wishing to work in Hungary. Bóka said in the post that applications for the card were tied to the same migration and security screening processes as other residence permits. The card is issued only in consideration of the relevant EU guidelines and after an assessment of security risks, and the EU had so far not objected to the practice, he said. Hungary is hosting only a fraction of Russian and Belarusian citizens currently staying in the EU, and the country issues a fraction of EU residence permits for Russian and Belarusian citizens, he said. Pintér said in the letter that Hungary continued to place great emphasis on the protection of its national security and the security of the Schengen area as a whole.

## **NATL ECONOMY MINISTER: HUNGARY TO START BUILDING CAPACITY OF RECYCLING BATTERIES IN 2024**

Márton Nagy, the national economy minister, on Wednesday met Yi Kang-Myung, the Chairman-CEO of Sungeel Hitech and other executives of the company to discuss challenges of the battery production industry and opportunities for the green transition, the ministry said. Kyu Dok Hong, South Korea's ambassador to Hungary, also attended the meeting. Nagy said Hungary is already at the helm of battery production, as the exports of batteries and battery parts now exceeds 5% of GDP, putting the country first in that respect in the European Union. Forging ties with companies like SungEel HiTech, the first company to successfully recover large amounts of raw materials from used lithium-ion batteries, was extremely important in Hungary and Europe, where recycling and reusing its valuable resources is as yet missing, Nagy said. Moreover, Nagy said SungEel supported sustainable technologies to recycle batteries. Hungary must ensure access to the best technologies to recycle large amounts of used batteries in a safe and environmentally conscious way by 2027 at the latest, as well as to reuse the useful materials of spent batteries, he said. To achieve that, the companies and venues investing in that side of the industry should be decided on this year, he said.

## **KOVÁCS: HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS ATTEND NATIONAL HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES IN BUDAPEST**

Several hundred thousand people attended programmes of the August 20 national holiday and watched the evening fireworks show in Budapest, state secretary Zoltán Kovács, who heads the operative staff coordinating the events, said on Facebook on Wednesday. Kovács noted that the evening show had been postponed by one hour due to the weather, and thanked spectators for their patience. He added that all programmes had been completed without major disturbances. He noted "the inconvenience and the delays caused by rain" but said that there had been no accidents during the programmes.

Until 11pm on Tuesday, the police had secured 324 programmes nationwide, Kovács said, and thanked the authorities and programme organisers for their efforts to make the events "safe and successful".

## **BLINKEN MARKS HUNGARY NATL HOLIDAY**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday greeted Hungary, marking the country's national holiday. In a statement issued by the US Department of State, Blinken congratulated Hungarians "commemorating more than a

millennium of your nation's rich history". "On this day of celebration, it is my hope that we can work towards a closer relationship between the United States and Hungary, rooted in democratic values, shared security, and prosperity. That is what the deep friendship between our peoples, and the rich history between our nations deserves," the statement said. Noting that Hungary became a NATO member 25 years ago, Blinken said "Hungary was welcomed into NATO because of its commitment to a democratic future. That commitment, like the deep bonds between our people, should be protected and form the bedrock of Hungary-United States relations."

### **BAKONDI: NUMBER OF ILLEGAL ENTRANTS ON SOUTHERN BORDER UP SIGNIFICANTLY IN RECENT WEEKS**

The number of illegal entrants on the border between Hungary and Serbia has grown significantly in recent weeks compared with earlier trends, the prime minister's chief domestic security advisor said on Wednesday, adding, however, that the number of border violations was not excessively high. The authorities apprehended 70 people on the southern border this past weekend, György Bakondi told public television M1, adding that more than 3,700 migrants have been caught so far this year. Bakondi said some people smuggling groups had gone back to trying to smuggle

migrants across the Hungarian border, explaining that this route was important to them because by coming in this direction, migrants had to cross fewer borders on their way to western Europe than if they took the Balkan route. He said the government was closely monitoring information concerning illegal migration coming from the Greek-Turkish border and was prepared to keep protecting the border even under more difficult circumstances. Meanwhile, Bakondi said more and more European countries, including Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany, were planning to tighten their immigration policies. He said many European countries now thought they had too many migrants who were receiving too many benefits. At the same time, he added, the public was becoming "politically impatient seeing the many crimes and terrorist attacks" committed by migrants over the last ten years, as reflected in this year's European parliamentary elections.

### **VITÉZY CALLS FOR NEW LOCAL ELECTION IN BUDAPEST'S 3RD DISTRICT**

Dávid Vitézy, an elected member of the Budapest municipal assembly, has called for a new local election in Budapest's 3rd district in wake of the arrest of the district mayor for alleged corruption. Vitézy, a representative of With Dávid Vitézy for Budapest-LMP-Greens, said on Facebook that a new election was needed to allow

local residents "to elect a mayor who, together with his deputy, is not heading a district with 128,000 residents from preliminary arrest". Vitézy criticised Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony for "not saying even a word about the political and administrative crisis that has developed in one of the largest districts of Budapest". He said the Budapest list in the local elections headed by Karácsony had included the current 3rd district mayor László Kiss (DK-LMP-Momentum-Socialists-Párbeszéd). According to the election billboards, Karácsony had recommended Kiss as "the best choice", he added. Karácsony should make it clear if he maintains his support for Kiss or agrees that he should resign, Vitézy said. "Karácsony's party could also be implicated" in the corruption case, considering that the campaign chief of Párbeszéd co-leader and 3rd district MP Tímea Szabó has also been detained by police, he added.

### **DK TURNS TO POLICE OVER GOVT'S HUF 600 BN OFFICE BUILDING PURCHASE**

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) is filing a police report alleging embezzlement regarding the government's decision to buy an office building for 600 billion forints (EUR 1.5bn), the party's deputy group leader said in Budapest on Wednesday. Gergely Arató told an online press conference that it was "outrageous

that at a time of a housing crisis, the government is spending on its own housing rather than that of young people and families." That sum would have been enough to build 15,000 apartments, he said. Citing experts, Arató insisted the offices were overpriced "by at least 40%".

### **JOBBIK PROPOSES HUF 100,000 AID FOR EACH SCHOOL STARTER**

The opposition Jobbik-Conservatives party is proposing that each child starting school should receive a grant of 100,000 forints (EUR 250), deputy leader Dániel Z Kárpát said on Wednesday. The MP said Hungarian families "do not in fact receive any assistance" when their children go to school, adding that the government's family allowances earlier made them "miss that amount" from their budget later on. On average, sending a child to primary school costs between 50,000-75,000 forints to start with, while "within weeks after the start of the

school year, they may be required to come up with extra amounts required by the school," he said. Z Kárpát said the subsidy could easily be financed "from one half or one third of a major state project".

### **CHARITY COLLECTING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT FOR NEEDY CHILDREN**

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta has launched a campaign to invite donations of school equipment for children in poor families, the organisation told MTI on Wednesday. Between Wednesday and Saturday, volunteers of the charity will receive pens, exercise books, pencil cases, school bags and other equipment at their stands set up at Interspar supermarkets, where those accessories can be purchased, their statement said. The volunteers will sort the donations into packages and send them locally to needy children before the start of the school year, the statement said. Interspar also

offers vouchers between 500 and 10,000 forints (EUR 1.30-26) that can be donated, the statement added. For details of the campaign visit the website [www.adniorom.hu](http://www.adniorom.hu)

### **EXHIBITION OF US-HUNGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS DRAWS 50,000 VISITORS**

An exhibition of the works of Hungarian photographers in the US featuring works by Andre Kertész, László Moholy-Nagy, Robert Capa and others has drawn some 50,000 visitors since it opened in April. The first comprehensive show of Hungarian-born photographers who had moved to the US featuring more than 170 photos by 32 artists is closing on Sunday, organisers said. The works are on loan from 17 collections in the US, including the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, The Getty in Los Angeles and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.